United Nations S/PV.4357

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4357th meeting

Monday, 20 August 2001, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahsan
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Maiga
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kulyk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 15 August 2001 from the Representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/797)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-51497 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 15 August 2001 from the Representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/797)

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Bahrain, Belgium, Djibouti, Egypt, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, Turkey and Yemen, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Mr. de Ruyt (Belgium), Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Bebars (Egypt), Mr. Sharma (India), Mr. Widodo (Indonesia), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Aldouri (Iraq), Mr. Akasaka (Japan), Mr. Goussous (Jordan), Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait), Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia), Mr. Ly (Mauritania), Mr. Loulichki (Morocco), Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Maitland (South Africa), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Cengizer (Turkey) and Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 17 August 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which was issued as document S/2001/799, and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held on Monday, 20 August 2001, regarding the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the current debate in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 17 August 2001 from the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to request that I be invited to participate in the debate on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

On previous occasions, the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In accordance with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 17 August 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Hajihosseini, Deputy Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, during the Council's discussion of the item entitled 'The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question'."

This letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2001/800.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Ahmad Hajihosseini.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 15 August 2001 from the representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations, document S/2001/797.

I should like to draw the attention of the members to the following documents: S/2001/754, S/2001/783, S/2001/785 and S/2001/798, respectively letters dated 31 July and 13, 14 and 16 August 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations; also documents S/2001/768, S/2001/770, S/2001/775, S/2001/780 and S/2001/787, respectively letters dated 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13 August 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations; and documents S/2001/790 and S/2001/791, letters dated 8 and 10 August 2001 respectively, from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine, on whom I call.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President. We also wish to express our happiness at seeing you preside over the Council during this month, and we wish you every success. I also wish to thank the Permanent Representative of China for his successful presidency in the previous month.

The Security Council is meeting today, five months after the vote on 27 March 2001 on the draft resolution submitted by the members of the Non-aligned Movement in the Council on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The draft resolution was not adopted due to the exercise of the veto by a permanent member of the Council. Since then, the situation has deteriorated dangerously into the current situation, of which members are all aware.

We sincerely believe that matters might have been different if the Council had been able to take specific measures, and that we would therefore be in a different situation today. In any case, it is difficult to believe, and impossible to justify, the fact that the Security Council has not succeeded in taking any measures since the adoption of resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000 on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. This is in spite of the several attempts that have taken place in this regard and in spite of the support of many members of the Council for those efforts.

This has taken place at a time when the Council is enthusiastically engaged in considering such issues as the prevention of armed conflict and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Frankly, it seems to me that there is something fundamentally wrong that is affecting this international mechanism that was agreed upon in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations — an impact that also touches on the mechanism's credibility and effectiveness. We call upon the members of the Council to consider this issue as a matter of principle and to adhere to the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security at all times and in all places.

We come back once again to the Council today because of our full adherence to the principle of the Council's responsibility — including, of course, its responsibility for the question of Palestine — and because of our rejection of any attempt to neutralize the Council in that regard. Irrespective of how it is formulated, such an attempt can only mean an effort to evade international law and legitimacy and to deal with matters in accordance with the de facto balance of power. The urgent reason why we have returned to the Council is, of course, the continuing deterioration of the situation to a very dangerous level and the fact that there is no other mechanism or organized sustained effort to halt that deterioration and change the situation. We even believe that the recent period has led to an undermining of the only available plan, which is embodied in the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh fact-finding committee known as the Mitchell Committee. Accordingly, we did not have

many options. We hope that the Council will this time be able to fulfil its duties and adopt the necessary resolution to provide the positive impetus we all need.

The unprecedented and bloody military campaign waged by Israel against our people began after Ariel Sharon's infamous visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif, on 28 September 2000. That visit precipitated the collective rejection by our people of an act of aggression against our sacred sites. It was also a rejection by Palestinians of Israel's continuing occupation and practices, and it ignited the second intifada. Since then, Israeli occupying forces have killed 563 Palestinians, a figure that increased to 572 over the course of the weekend. Just yesterday, by shelling a house in Rafah, the occupation forces murdered Samir Abu Zaid, his seven-year old son Salman and his three-year old daughter Alaa. Also yesterday, those forces murdered Ahmed Abu Arar, who was 14 years of age. They also killed another man in Nablus and injured one other while he tried to circumvent an Israeli checkpoint as he travelled back to his village near Nablus after purchasing school supplies for his children in that city. Checkpoints are intended to block the passage of an entire people. When someone tries to bypass those checkpoints he is murdered by the Israeli occupying forces. Is there anything more heinous than that?

During this period, therefore, the Israeli occupying forces have killed 572 Palestinians, many of them children. That figure is in addition to the Palestinians who have been martyred through other means, but nonetheless as a result of the occupation. In addition, around 20,000 Palestinians have been injured —many of them have been left permanently disabled.

The Israeli occupying forces have also caused extensive destruction to the economy and have razed vast agricultural areas and uprooted thousands of trees. In many instances they have also used heavy weapons — including tanks, helicopter gunships and even F-16 jets — to shell and destroy civilian houses and many sites belonging to the Palestinian Authority and other Palestinian institutions. They have also imposed internal and external blockades, which has led to the complete dismemberment of Palestinian territory and to a severe limitation of the movement of persons and goods between Palestinian territory and the outside world.

The occupying forces have also committed extrajudicial killings and assassinations against targeted persons by several means, including helicopter missiles and special covert units. On several occasions they have also invaded areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority, and Israeli tanks have recently entered and temporarily occupied an entire Palestinian city.

In addition to all that there are the atrocities committed by gangs of illegal Israeli settlers against our people under the cover and protection of the occupying forces. The Israeli occupying forces have thus committed many atrocities against our people, some of which are without doubt war crimes under the clear definition set out in the Fourth Geneva Convention and its First Additional Protocol, as well as the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In general, the result of Israel's bloody military campaign and other measures, such as the withholding of Palestinian funds, has been the transformation of the lives of an entire people into a veritable hell and placing them, in essence, into a number of collective prisons. This is in addition to direct oppression, economic devastation and every sort of suffering to which the Palestinian people have been subjected. We have documented all of Israel's actions in 63 letters addressed to the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly — letters that constitute the dossier of Israel's crimes. We have done so in order to keep the Council and the representatives of the international community aware of the details of what has been taken place. All of this has not been enough for Israel.

Recently, Israel has taken yet another illegal step by raiding and closing down Orient House, which is the Palestinian political centre in occupied East Jerusalem. That closure is in addition to the closure of nine other buildings belonging to other Palestinian institutions. This step constitutes a dangerous escalation and an assault on Palestinian national dignity and rights in the Holy City. Furthermore, it also marks a reversal by force of an important part of the agreements reached between the two sides and is a flagrant violation of the explicit commitment made in a letter dated 11 October 1993 from the Foreign Minister of Israel to the Foreign Minister of Norway regarding Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem. In that connection, we would like to recall that international consensus and relevant Security Council resolutions affirm that all actions

taken by Israel, the occupying Power, aimed at changing the legal status and demographic composition of Jerusalem are illegal, null and void.

After all this, Israel, the occupying Power, talks about Palestinian violence and denounces Palestinian acts of resistance. The origin of the whole conflict is the existence of the Israeli occupation and the practices of this occupation for 34 years, especially settler colonialism manifested in the confiscation of land and the illegal transfer of Israelis to the occupied territory and building settlements for them.

Another factor arises, which is the ongoing existence of occupation and its practices even after the start of the peace process and more than seven years after the signing of the Oslo agreement. Any attempt to ignore or circumvent this, in addition to being immoral, will only lead to failure in finding the necessary solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Middle East crisis.

As for the current dangerous deterioration, it is basically an outcome of Israeli actions and measures, particularly the military ones to which I have referred. Tension and confrontation are not caused because the Palestinian side attempts to invade Israel and not because the Palestinian Authority tries, for example, to expand its control and regain Palestinian territory. Tension and confrontation are there because Israeli occupying forces have expanded over Palestinian populated areas, constituting a state of unbearable pressure on our people, and have undertaken an unprecedented bloody military occupation, to which I have referred as well.

One issue preoccupying the Palestinian side, which we do not approve of, is the bombings that have taken place in Israel. We do not condone such acts. We have clearly condemned them, as we have condemned all acts of violence against civilians. But in order to understand events correctly, this wave of explosions did not begin until much time had passed after the beginning of the bloody Israeli military campaign last September.

How can this dangerous situation be brought to an end, and how can we return to the path of peace? In our opinion, dealing with the situation on the ground in an effective and speedy manner should take place within a political context, because we believe that you cannot separate security or the actual situation on the ground from the political vision and the future that awaits the two sides.

What we certainly believe is that dealing with the situation on the ground cannot be achieved by the illogical attempt to put the burden on the Palestinian side, as Israel and some parties are trying to do. For our part, we have clearly declared our acceptance of the report of the Mitchell Committee, and we have called for the comprehensive implementation of the recommendations of the report, which aim at restoring the situation to what it was before September 2000 and towards the resumption of the peace process.

For its part, the Israeli Government has frequently expressed its animosity towards the Committee and its report. Mr. Sharon said before the report was issued that Israel's acceptance of the Committee's establishment was a strategic mistake. After the report was issued the Israeli Government said that it did not accept the recommendation regarding the cessation of settlement activity and did not accept the criticism in the report directed at the Israeli Army. Finally, the Israeli Government said that it accepted the report. Great, but in return, it invented the notion of the separate stages of the implementation of the report, then invented this seven-day cooling-off period that should precede implementation of the recommendations as a condition for such implementation.

How can the cooling-off period be achieved without the joint implementation of the recommendations by the two sides? If such a cooling down can be achieved before the implementation, why should we need these recommendations to begin with? In short, we believe that this Israeli position is, at best, unrealistic and impractical and impedes the implementation of the recommendations. At worst, it is an expression of the rejection of the report and a means to bury it. This is the truth.

We call for the immediate, comprehensive and scrupulous implementation of the recommendations contained in the report, and we call upon the parties, particularly those that have participated in its formulation, to adhere to it and to push in this direction.

As for the general political context, a matter that cannot be avoided, we once more declare our commitment to signed agreements and our commitment to negotiate on the basis of Security Council

resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), taking into consideration the developments in previous discussions between the two sides with the aim of reaching a final agreement on all issues, including Jerusalem, refugees and the borders. We call upon the Israeli side to declare the same commitment and to relinquish the attempts to circumvent the signed agreements and seek partial solutions instead of a final settlement. We, of course, also call upon all other concerned parties to affirm the same position.

It is saddening that what is currently happening, and the prevailing situation threatening the region as a whole, come after the parties got close to reaching a final settlement and to achieving peace. In all cases, we believe that there is a solution to the conflict. It is a clear solution, and, more than that, it is achievable. But we need the assistance of the international community to achieve such a solution, and we hope that this will be the case. Towards that end, we hope that this time the Council will succeed in contributing to stopping the bloodshed. To start the path of return to negotiations and peace, we have proposed modest goals to be included in the draft resolution, because we want the Council to succeed, which is an extremely important matter to all parties. Let us work together to achieve this.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Permanent Observer of Palestine for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Israel, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): At the outset, Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the Security Council and to congratulate your predecessor, the distinguished Permanent Representative of China, on his most able leadership of the Council.

My country, Israel, is a country that seeks peace. This may sound commonplace, but in this tormented period when hatred and mistrust are deepening between Israelis and Palestinians, even such a cliché becomes essential in order to rebuild the lost language of peace and to recover the spirit of the acceptance of the other. Our desire to live in peace and coexistence with our Palestinian partners and our neighbours in the region is imperishable. Our hand remains extended in peace, as it has for 53 years of Israeli statehood. We do, however, believe in a vital, urgent and necessary need, namely, to end the current Israeli-Palestinian setback.

In this spirit, the State of Israel has accepted the Mitchell report, in all its sequential aspects, as a road map leading back to the negotiating table, and we remain committed to it. Even before the Tenet ceasefire took effect, Israel implemented its own unilateral ceasefire. Unfortunately, these actions were met with no reciprocal gestures from the Palestinian side. Consequently, 36 Israelis have been killed and 292 have been injured in over 1,300 separate attacks since the Tenet plan took effect in mid-June.

Thus, today's meeting takes place not only against the backdrop that the Palestinians have depicted, but also against the backdrop of ongoing Palestinian terrorism, which in the last two weeks has escalated to an average of more than 20 attacks per day, with scores of Israelis killed or injured. It appears that despite the recent atrocity in Jerusalem, which echoes a similar atrocity in Tel Aviv in early June — not to mention the daily gunfire attacks everywhere — the Palestinians have no scruples about convening a meeting of the Security Council to discuss Israeli actions.

This unprecedented escalation of Palestinian terror is not in itself a new phenomenon in Israel. We have been facing a calculated and orchestrated campaign of Palestinian terror for more than 10 months; bombings and shootings in civilian areas have become a fact of life for many Israelis. What has changed — and to catastrophic effect — is the frequency, intensity and horror of the attacks.

Ten days ago, a Palestinian suicide bomber walked into a crowded Jerusalem restaurant during the lunch hour and detonated a powerful explosive charge, sending glass, chairs, tables and even human beings flying through the air and out into the street. Reports from the scene described a nightmare of chaos, wanton destruction and intense human suffering. When the dust had settled, 15 people lay dead and more than 130 were injured. Among them were seven children, five members of one family — a mother and father and three of their children, ages 14, 4 and 2 — a tourist from Brazil, and a pregnant American schoolteacher.

Before Israel could fully grieve for that senseless loss, another bomb ripped apart a coffee house near the northern coastal city of Haifa. There too, a Palestinian suicide bomber entered a small, crowded café and

detonated powerful explosives. Twenty-one Israelis were injured in the blast, and it was only by a miracle that no one was killed.

Both those attacks bear a frightening resemblance to the Palestinian suicide bombing outside a Tel Aviv nightclub on 1 June 2001. In what has now become a familiar pattern, a Palestinian terrorist situated himself among scores of civilians waiting to enter, and detonated an explosive that ended 21 young lives.

What would any Government do in the face of ongoing daily acts of terrorism that spilled blood on the streets and denied its citizens a sense of security?

Prior to the Jerusalem bombing, Israel provided the Palestinian Authority with a list of terrorists engaged in planning impending attacks on Israel. The Palestinian Authority ignored the information on that list and, in flagrant violation of signed agreements, took no action whatsoever. On that list figured Abdullah Barghouti, who was the mastermind of the Jerusalem bombing. Had the Palestinian Authority fulfilled its obligation to renounce terrorism, had the Palestinian Authority been serious about implementing its part of a ceasefire and arrested Abdullah Barghouti, 15 lives would have been spared and an immeasurable rise in mistrust and suspicion between our two peoples could have been avoided.

Obviously, terrorism has become the Palestinian Authority's preferred way to deal with the peace process. The Palestinian leadership, in fact, has much to lose by using terrorism for the achievement of political ends.

That is a message that Israel should not be alone in expressing. Terrorism is a global issue. The entire free world has a vital interest in making clear that terrorism is totally unacceptable and that no gains will ever accrue to those who wilfully attack civilians. Chairman Arafat must receive a clear and unequivocal message from the Security Council and from the international community: terrorism is unacceptable.

In the light of the security situation, Israel was forced to take action in defence of its citizens. These were not actions that we wished to take; they were actions that were forced upon us, and at the same time they were indispensable.

Israel is obligated, under every norm of international law and custom, to take concerted action in defence of its citizens. In that regard, we should be treated like any other nation that faces armed aggression, let alone continuous violence directed specifically at innocent civilians, seeking to cut them down as they go about the most ordinary aspects of their lives.

The use of human beings as bombs is an alarming phenomenon that presents no obvious response. Individuals who are willing to sacrifice their lives in such a gruesome manner will not be deterred by ordinary means. Our response must therefore be adapted and geared towards cutting off terror at its source because, once it is unleashed, it is virtually impossible to stop.

In the face of international scrutiny of Israel with regard to its alleged violation of international norms, I wish to draw the Council's attention to the fact that Palestinian suicide bombings, which engender death and devastation, cannot be regarded as perfectly judicial. They do not exemplify a moderate use of force and do not comply with international law and human rights. They constitute a unique challenge that requires adapted responses.

In the fight against Palestinian terror, no one is more obligated than Chairman Arafat. It was his commitment, expressed in his letter to the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, which qualified him as a partner for peace. What is more, no one is better positioned to contain terrorism at its source than Chairman Arafat. Instead of doing so, as he has repeatedly promised, Chairman Arafat has himself become a party to terrorism. He has released terrorists from jail; he has used the official Palestinian media to incite them to violence; he has refused to re-arrest them even when he knew they were about to commit murder; and he has invited the Hamas and Islamic Jihad terror organizations to join him in a unity coalition. As long as the Palestinians maintain that policy, Israel will continue to take the steps it deems necessary to keep the Palestinian machinery of killing off its streets.

We have waited long enough — nearly a year in fact –and we have given the Palestinian leadership every opportunity to fulfil its obligations and to contain terrorism. After the Mitchell Committee submitted its recommendations calling, first and foremost, for an end to the violence, we waited. After a Palestinian suicide bomber took down 21 young people at a Tel Aviv nightclub, we waited. After Chairman Arafat agreed to the terms of the Tenet ceasefire, we waited. Each time,

we waited, and we ended up waiting only for the next attack. We cannot be expected to wait any more.

Israel's action in Jenin was intended to achieve what Chairman Arafat has thus far failed to achieve, namely the prevention of violence. Our response was a limited one, taken in a city that has become a hub of suicide bombers. No casualties were incurred as a result of that preventive action that undoubtedly saved the lives of innocent civilians.

Israel's actions are in accord not only with agreements signed between the parties, but also with established principles of international law, most pertinently the right to self-defence.

After the devastating carnage that littered the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, it can no longer be denied that Israel is genuinely under attack.

Similarly, Israel's seizure of Orient House and the Abu Dis compound is not a takeover, it is not occupation, it is not an act of revenge, but an act of self-defence. What we have done is take temporary control of buildings that were being used by official Palestinian forces to assist terrorists in carrying out their murderous attacks. Israeli forces recovered intelligence reports and illegal weapons from Orient House that constitute irrefutable proof that the site was being used for political and military purposes.

Israel has agreed to the presence in Jerusalem of Palestinian institutions serving the communal needs of the city's Palestinian population. A letter to that effect was sent by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to Norwegian Foreign Minister Hoist. However, this letter clearly refers only to economic, social, educational and cultural institutions. Orient House was, in fact, being used for much more, as indicated by the intelligence materials and illegal arms found by Israeli forces that entered the site. Thus, Palestinian actions there are not protected under the terms specified in Shimon Peres's letter.

The legality of our actions in Abu Dis conforms to the same principle. Palestinian forces headquartered in the District Governor's compound in Abu Dis — including the security forces, Force 17, the Palestinian police, the intelligence services and others — have been engaged in organizing and instigating terrorist activities. In so doing, they have failed to comply with their obligations under Israeli-Palestinian agreements, including, inter alia, Chairman Arafat's cardinal undertaking to renounce the use of terrorism and violence and to resolve all outstanding issues through negotiations.

In taking control of these buildings, which have been used to coordinate terrorist activity, Israel has acted in full compliance with its responsibilities under signed agreements. Under those agreements, the areas in question are designated as Areas B and C, areas in which Israel is responsible for maintaining security and for fighting terror. The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement stipulates that not only is Israel permitted to take security measures in those areas but, in fact, it is required to do so. This is our moral obligation, and our response is driven by this obligation.

Similar principles apply to Orient House, as well. Under signed agreements, Jerusalem is specifically excluded from Palestinian jurisdiction. Under the Interim Agreement, Palestinian Authority offices may be located only in areas under Palestinian territorial jurisdiction in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Notwithstanding, Palestinian offices have been located in Orient House, in violation of agreed arrangements.

In both cases, in that of Orient House, as well as in that of the District Governor's compound in Abu Dis, the Palestinian leadership, and particularly Chairman Arafat, must take into account that converting terrorism into a political tool will entail a political loss.

Israel regards the draft resolution before the Council as a biased and one-sided document that seeks to place the onus of the present crisis squarely on one party. In fact, it requires virtually nothing of the Palestinian side. It does not call for a commitment to resolutely fight terror, nor does it call for the re-arrest of terrorists currently planning future attacks on Israel.

Even with regard to violence itself, the draft resolution, in operative paragraph 1, uses a sort of coded language that refers exclusively to Israel and thereby frees the Palestinians from their own obligations to end the violence. There is no "call on the two sides", but rather, a sophisticated semantic texture that explicitly designates Israel as the unique source of violence and implicitly absolves the Palestinian side of its killing of 156 Israelis and the injuring of hundreds more. With regard to negotiations, let me reiterate that we are willing to undertake them once the terror ends, on the basis of existing signed agreements.

Even more, the draft resolution's supposed fidelity to the recommendations of the Mitchell report is entirely disingenuous. Nowhere does the spirit of the Mitchell Committee permeate this document with regard to the obligations of the Palestinian side. The Palestinians, who have repeatedly called for the implementation of the Mitchell recommendations, seem to have forgotten precisely what they are. Allow me to remind them.

The Mitchell report calls, first and foremost, for an unconditional cessation of violence, followed by a cooling-off period, then a series of confidence-building measures and ultimately a return to negotiations. The report further states

> "the Palestinian Authority should make clear through concrete action to Palestinians and Israelis alike that terrorism is reprehensible and unacceptable"

and by taking all measures "to prevent terrorist operations and to punish perpetrators".

I would like to ask, where in the draft resolution is there any similar reference to the Palestinian obligations regarding terrorism? I would also like to ask why operative paragraph 1 does not call on the Palestinian side to put an end to the unspeakable practice of suicide bombings.

Moreover, even though the Mitchell report calls for an incremental series of steps, the draft resolution totally ignores the sequential procedure. Since the Mitchell report refers to a direct, face-to-face approach, there appears to be no justification for further complicating matters by subjecting implementation to international supervision and scrutiny or by imposing any kind of monitoring mechanism that has not been negotiated and agreed to by both sides. Such a selective reading of the Mitchell report does not advance the cause of peace.

In calling for international protection, as stipulated in the preamble of the draft resolution, the Palestinian leadership is once again exposing its duplicity in seeking exemption from the consequences of their own aggressive and violent behaviour. How can the Palestinians claim the need for protection while they kill Israelis by the dozens on an ongoing basis?

Israel therefore remains opposed to an international presence in this context, as that would contravene both the spirit and the letter of direct bilateral face-to-face negotiations. More importantly, such a presence would be totally ineffective in preventing terrorist attacks like the recent suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. An international presence cannot dismantle the bomb factories of Hamas and Islamic Jihad; it cannot intercept suicide bombers on their way to carry out attacks; it cannot stop snipers and mortar fire from targeting Israeli civilians.

In short, an international presence cannot return peace and quiet to our region; that requires the concerted effort of Chairman Arafat, who cannot be permitted to escape his commitment and his duty. Rather than hiding behind an internationally supplied shield, which in any case must be agreed by both sides, the Palestinians must fulfil their obligations to renounce terror and violence.

If more evidence of the limitations of an international presence is needed, the behaviour of UNIFIL vis-à-vis Hezbollah is highly instructive. When a confrontation over control of two vehicles, using the abduction of three Israeli soldiers on 8 October 2000, arose between UNIFIL — a well-trained and well-armed force representing international legitimacy — and a small group of Hezbollah terrorists, UNIFIL surrendered to the demands of Hezbollah. According to the recent United Nations report of the fact-finding team led by Joseph Connor, senior officials in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations expressed grave concern over this fact. What are we therefore to assume would be the reaction of a team of observers in the territories — or any other international mechanism — to a potential confrontation or to the daily harassment by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Tanzim?

All calls for an international presence have been predicated on the mutual acquiescence of both sides. For its part, Israel does not accept such a presence. It would be ineffectual and would set a dangerous precedent by relieving the responsible party of its international and bilateral obligations. The only way to break the cycle of violence is to prevail upon Chairman Arafat to comply with acceptable norms of behaviour and rid the territory under his jurisdiction of this vile scourge.

It is for these reasons that we find the current draft resolution totally unacceptable, and we thoroughly reject it.

Under the destructive and painful influence of the violence that has rocked the region for 11 months, we seem to have lost our ability to speak in the language of peace. Israelis still recall the courageous moral and political stance of the late President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, who, with his proclamation of "No more war", broke open an emotional and political avenue that permitted the historic breakthrough that constituted Israel's treaty of peace with Egypt.

We have read Chairman Arafat's commitment to renounce terror and violence, and for a time we saw in him the image of a new peacemaker. But his current terror alliance, the education in hatred and exclusion that permeates Palestinian society, and the campaign of incitement and demonization of Israel and the Jewish people that fills Palestinian television and newspapers are not only harming the Palestinian people and their will to exist in peace, but are undermining the faith of the people of Israel in our ability to render war and confrontation a relic of the past.

We must return ourselves to the lost language of peace. The recommendations of the Mitchell Committee must be fully implemented without delay, including, first and foremost, an immediate and total cessation of violence. There is nothing that must be discussed or negotiated. It is a simple and straightforward necessity that requires concerted action, not meaningless and empty proclamations.

I invite our Palestinian partners to join us in implementing — not declaring, but implementing — the true and genuine ceasefire. Let us lay down our arms and return once more to the process of building a future based on respect, coexistence, cooperation and peace.

Mr. Maiga (Mali) *(spoke in French)*: I would like to start by thanking you, Mr. President, for having responded promptly to my delegation's request, on behalf of the group of Islamic States Members of the United Nations, for an urgent meeting of the Security Council to examine the serious situation prevailing in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine, for his statement. It constitutes an extremely useful update today as we debate the question of Palestine. I would also like to present the sincere condolences of my delegation to the families of the Palestinian martyrs who have fallen on the field of honour and to hope for the prompt recovery of the thousands of injured.

The overall situation in the occupied territories, since we last considered the question in March 2001, has deteriorated significantly with a further escalation of violence, the excessive and ongoing use of force by Israel, so-called targeted assassinations of Palestinian political figures, in violation of international law, recourse to combat aircraft against Palestinian towns, the permanent blockading of the territories, massive human rights violations and today the occupation by the Israeli authorities of Orient House and eight Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, as well as an armed incursion into the city of Jenin, under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

This dark picture clearly shows the endless suffering of the Palestinian people. These acts of sheer provocation by the Israeli authorities show a worrisome turn in events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the effect that they not only seek to deprive the Holy City of Al-Quds of its particular legal status recognized by Israel since 1967, but are also a flagrant violation of the agreements between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority. This is why the commitment of all of us, in particular the Security Council, is necessary to bring them to an end, redress matters and avoid the unfortunate consequences that might jeopardize international peace and security in the region of the Middle East.

On 7 October 2000 the Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000), in which it condemned the excessive use of force by Israel, the occupying Power, and called upon Israel to discharge its obligations consistent with the Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. Today we are compelled to acknowledge that almost 10 months after the adoption of that resolution, Israel continues to have recourse to force, as we see in the raids it perpetrated on Palestinian cities on 18 May, tank incursions in autonomous territory, and the intensification of the hateful targeted-assassination campaign.

Confronted with this situation, Mali — as well as Palestine, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the rest of the international community — resolutely condemns the excessive use of force by Israel in response to protests by Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. Mali also

condemns measures to lock down the territories, restrictions on the circulation of people and goods and the refusal to pay to the Palestinian Authority its customs revenue, as well as all other measures of collective punishment. These measures have a disastrous impact on the Palestinian economy and on the daily life of the inhabitants, and they transform the life in the territories into a constant struggle for survival.

My delegation remains convinced that the situation would not have deteriorated to this extent if, in December 2000 and then in March 2001 the Council had reacted favourably to the draft resolutions presented by the high-level conclave of the Non-Aligned, which merely called for deployment of United Nations observers in the field in order to protect Palestinian civilians from the violence and crimes perpetrated by the occupying Power, Israel.

Events throughout the territories clearly demonstrate that deploying observers remains a topical issue. Such a deployment would be a positive contribution by the Security Council to the peace process and would create a favourable climate for the resumption of dialogue and negotiation. Better yet, the question of observers falls clearly within the debate currently under way within the Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, as well as on conflict prevention. The Council cannot adopt standards and a type of behaviour that are different in the case of Palestinian civilians, because this would jeopardize its credibility and would confirm the accusations of a much-derided policy of double standards whenever Israel is at stake. Inaction on the part of the Council would only increase tension and lead to a worsening of the situation. Furthermore, the impunity that the Israeli authorities seem to enjoy further intensifies the cycle of violence.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that my delegation hopes that today's meeting will lead to the taking of enforceable decisions and immediate action that reflect the primary responsibility of the Council in maintaining international peace and security. Indeed, the Council is duty bound to play its part and fully shoulder the burden of its responsibilities by applying various forms of pressure to Israel so that it brings to an end its policy of terror against the Palestinian people and reverses the serious and illegal measures that it has taken with respect to Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem.

Before concluding, I would like to reaffirm my delegation's support for the peace initiatives of Egypt and Jordan and the recommendations of the Mitchell fact-finding committee. If implemented by the parties, these different measures would help them to emerge from the present deadlock and put and end to the violence.

Mr. Ward (Jamaica): It is with a great deal of disappointment that we note that events in the occupied Palestinian territories have made it necessary for the Security Council to convene this meeting. My delegation was heartened by the seemingly positive developments in the Middle East peace process, which only a year ago offered a glimmer of hope that, at long last, both sides were moving closer towards a common understanding, necessary for a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement. Both sides seemed to be willing to take the bold steps necessary to bridge the divide which separates them. Both sides seemed willing to exercise the political will to bring the conflict to a lasting and just conclusion.

However, what has transpired since 28 September 2000 has proved to be more tragic than anyone could have imagined. In the 10 months since the current outbreak of violence began, over 750 persons — Palestinians and Israelis — have died. The concessions, which were painfully won over several years of arduous negotiation, have evaporated, and the gains attained by confidence-building measures have been reversed, with relations between the parties being at their worst level in decades.

The parties have not heeded the call by the Council, contained in resolution 1322 (2000), for the immediate cessation of violence and for all necessary steps to be taken to ensure that the cycle of violence be brought to an end. The Council has committed itself to fully supporting the role of the Secretary-General in facilitating the peace process, and my delegation urges the Secretary-General to explore every possible avenue for peace.

My delegation supported the convening of this meeting today, not because we were naive enough to think that after a day-long series of speeches the parties would be motivated to salvage the peace process but, rather, because we believe that it is crucial that the Security Council continue to offer its help and support to the peace process. If we can bring the parties back from the brink of total chaos and offer them hope that

the peace process is not dead, then we will have achieved significant progress. It is the responsibility of the Security Council — indeed, it is our duty — to be engaged on this issue, and the international community expects no less from us.

Those who would suggest that the Security Council has no role in dealing with this issue are wrong, and have been wrong over the past several months. We cannot stand by and watch total disregard for human life and property become the order of the day.

My delegation maintains that the provisions of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement and the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee remain the best basis to move the peace process forward. In this regard, we maintain that the parties should immediately take steps towards implementing their commitments under the agreement. Specifically, the parties need to undertake the following four key steps.

First, they must unequivocally end all violence. They should take immediate, concrete measures to end the current confrontation, maintain calm and prevent the recurrence of violent events. In order to achieve this, both sides need to take the steps necessary to enable a return to the situation that existed prior to the current crisis, including restoring law and order, redeploying military forces, eliminating points of friction, enhancing security cooperation and ending the economic blockade of the occupied Palestinian territories.

Secondly, both parties should resume confidence-building measures; the parties should resume their efforts to identify, condemn and discourage incitement in all its forms. Both sides should take concrete actions to demonstrate that terrorism in all its forms, and extrajudicial killings, are unacceptable.

Thirdly, the Israeli Government must freeze all settlement activity and both sides should undertake to preserve and protect holy sites sacred to the traditions of Jews, Muslims and Christians. The Israeli Government should also reverse action taken recently against Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in and around occupied East Jerusalem. Fourthly, the Israelis and Palestinians should resume negotiations on the basis of agreements reached prior to 28 September 2000.

Jamaica, for its part, reiterates its unqualified support for efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace within the framework of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In March this year, Jamaica supported sending an observation team to the Palestinian territories, a position that did not receive the needed support of members of the Council. We still believe that the deployment of such a force could act as a deterrent to further violence and as a confidence-building measure between the Palestinians and the Israelis. We should ask ourselves how many lives could have been saved and how far the peace process could have advanced had we exercised the political will and approved sending observers into the field several months ago.

We note that, since that time, the issue of a monitoring mechanism has received the support of important regional and multilateral organizations, which have concluded that under the current circumstances, third-party monitoring should be accepted by both parties, as it would serve their interests in implementing the Mitchell Committee recommendations.

The creation of a mechanism to help the parties implement the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee report would create a more stable situation on the ground. We hope that the Israelis and the Palestinians will find these proposals to be acceptable in the quest for peace. The Security Council must give its full backing to this effort.

Despite repeated references to a draft resolution, to my delegation's certain knowledge there is no draft resolution or outcome document before the Security Council for consideration at this time. It is my delegation's hope, however, that when the Council is ready to take action, as it should, it will be possible to act in unity and consensus in advancing the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Decisions taken in the Security Council following this meeting will be a litmus test of the Council's resolve to assist the peace process in the Middle East. Whether we choose to take concrete action or whether we choose just to talk will ultimately affect the way that future historians judge our contribution — the contribution of the Security Council and of the international community — to the resolution of the conflict in the Middle East. Can the Security Council act responsibly?

Mr. Cunningham (United States): The United States is deeply concerned by the situation in the Middle East. We approach the tenth anniversary of the Madrid Conference in October against the backdrop of the most serious confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians in a decade. Palestinians and Israelis have been traumatized by almost a year of violence and disruption. There has been great suffering on both sides. We are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life, including of children. This violence has taken a tremendous toll and seriously undermined the working partnership that began with the signing of the Oslo Declaration of Principles.

The United States and others in the international community — including the other co-sponsor, Russia, and our Secretary-General — are working hard to end the violence and to restore some measure of confidence between the parties. It is precisely because of the gravity of events on the ground that we question the appropriateness and effectiveness of any action here in New York. What is required now is not rhetoric, not debate that polarizes an already volatile situation and certainly not an effort to condemn one side with unbalanced charges or to impose unworkable ideas that will not change the reality on the ground. That is not the way for the Council to fulfil its duties. It must not be drawn into an effort that will make lasting peace more difficult.

Instead, what should guide action and debate is what can be done practically, working with both sides to end the violence and transform the environment in a way that will permit the resumption of a political process and a return to negotiations. It is towards this objective that the United States and others here have been working intensively. Our pledge is that we will continue our efforts.

It is critical that the terror and violence end. It is imperative that everything possible be done to pre-empt terror, arrest those responsible for terrorism, bring them to justice and end the incitement that creates an environment for their actions. There can be no justification or excuse for these actions. These horrific attacks have killed and wounded Israelis indiscriminately and have claimed American lives as well.

The Palestinian Authority must act and make it unmistakably clear by its own actions that it will not tolerate these activities. Without such action, the situation will only deteriorate further.

At the same time, Israel should also avoid actions that might escalate the situation, and take steps on the ground, of both an economic and a security nature, that will alleviate pressure on Palestinians and transform the reality of their daily lives.

There is no magic wand to accomplish these objectives, no statement, resolution, nor action by the Council that can remedy this tragic situation. But there is a pathway forward, which the United States and others in this room have endorsed. The recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, led by former Senator Mitchell and other distinguished international statesmen from Turkey, Norway and the European Union, provide a realistic, practical, comprehensive approach to dealing with this crisis. These recommendations have been accepted by the parties themselves and provide a road map for them to follow in order to end the violence, rebuild confidence and change the dynamic of grievance and violence so that Israelis and Palestinians can resume a political process again.

The Fact-Finding Committee's recommendations rightly call initially for an unconditional end to the violence. Indeed, there can be no progress, let alone meaningful negotiations, without it. The United States has taken the lead in working with the parties to develop a security work plan for implementing a ceasefire. At the same time, the report ends with a call for returning to negotiations. These negotiations will allow the parties to address the underlying issues that fuel their conflict and to return to a path towards peace. The United States continues to believe that the bases for these negotiations are Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principles embodied in the Madrid Conference.

Simply and sadly put, there are no quick or easy solutions to this bitter conflict. There are no shortcuts in this Council or elsewhere. Peace cannot be imposed; it has to be worked for. Implementation of the Mitchell recommendations, however difficult, remains the only viable pathway forward. And we call upon those gathered here today to support ongoing efforts towards that end.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has been following with deep concern the acute conflict between the

Palestinian and Israeli peoples that has now lasted for almost a year without let-up. Almost every day the international community has witnessed scenes of horrible terrorist acts, which are then followed by very emotionally charged acts of retaliation. As a result the Palestinian territories and the Middle East as a whole are becoming increasingly destabilized. Unfortunately, we must recognize that the peace dialogue between the Palestinians and Israelis has been greatly set back, and all the progress achieved through incredibly intense efforts has been obliterated.

Since the outbreak of the conflict, Russia, as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, has been making most vigorous efforts to put an end to the violence, to stabilize the situation as soon as possible and to return to seeking a comprehensive settlement for the region. This issue has continued to be a focus of attention for the President of Russia and for the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is maintaining contact with the Israeli and Palestinian leadership, with the Secretary-General and with his colleagues in the United States, in European Union States and in Arab countries. The special representative of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs is almost always in the Middle East, where together with other international mediators he works daily with the Palestinians and the Israelis.

In this connection we believe that current efforts must be focused above all on promptly launching the implementation of the agreements that have already been entered into by the two sides. The recommendations contained in the report of the Mitchell Committee must be used as a platform for a settlement. The report has the advantage of having been approved by both the Palestinians and the Israelis, and the Mitchell plan is also particularly relevant, insofar as it covers all the key components of a future normalization process and as it outlines a road map of how to get from a ceasefire and an end to the violence to confidence-building measures and the resumption of political dialogue.

We fully realize the complexity of achieving this goal. Time is becoming increasingly of the essence since the daily bloodshed is strengthening rising mutual distrust. We cannot allow the logic of inevitable confrontation to take hold in the region. We see the top priority today as being the urgent end to confrontations between Palestinians and Israelis. Special responsibility for this lies with the leaders of both sides, who must begin a direct dialogue so as to undertake concrete steps to de-escalate the tensions, put an end to all types of violence and provocation, adopt measures to normalize the situation and resume the negotiation process. The Palestinian and Israeli leadership must demonstrate political will, must step back from the harsh legacy of the past and must take courageous decisions in favour of peace. We hope that such an understanding exists on both sides of the conflict. This brings to mind the words that history rewards political courage.

The Palestinian Authority leadership must undertake decisive steps to put an end to extremist activities and to prevent terrorist acts and violence. The Israelis must refrain from methods of repression such as shelling Palestinian targets, sending troops into areas that are under full control of the Palestinian administration, carrying out extrajudiciary reprisals and seizing official Palestinian institutions. A redressing of the situation would be helped by the urgent resumption of cooperation in the area of security, with the consequent resumption of political dialogue based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principles of the Madrid Conference.

For its part, the Russian co-sponsor will continue to maintain intensive contacts with the Palestinian and Israeli leadership and other interested parties, with a view to halting the dangerous escalation in the Middle East.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): There has been escalation recently in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Recent suicide bombings inside Israel have resulted in heavy civilian casualties. The Israeli side, however, has resorted time and again to the excessive use of arms, closing the Orient House by force, which houses the office of the Palestine Liberation Organization in East Jerusalem. For a time, it even sent troops to occupy the self-governing Palestinian city Jenin on the West Bank of the River Jordan, leading to further exacerbation of the situation.

These latest developments have caused deep concern in the international community. We support the Security Council in convening this public debate today. The United Nations should make active efforts to end the bloodshed in the conflict between Israel and Palestine and to ease tension in the region as soon as possible. The Chinese delegation condemns all violent activities leading to the escalation of the conflict and to

civilian casualties. We strongly appeal to the two sides to exercise restraint and to stop all forms of violence. We call on the Israeli Government to return the Orient House and other occupied Palestinian buildings to the Palestinian side immediately. With help from the international community, the two sides should implement, as soon as possible, the relevant recommendations of the Mitchell report and create favourable conditions for the resumption of peace talks.

In recent years, the Security Council has held discussions and has adopted resolutions and presidential statements on issues such as the prevention of armed conflict and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Now, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is escalating. The international community has placed high expectations on the United Nations. It is our hope that Council members will be able to make an active, practical and constructive effort in the spirit of resolutions and presidential statements already adopted to hold serious consultations on the grave situation of the violent Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as adopt necessary measures to be immediately taken.

Council members should put differences aside and work to achieve a consensus as soon as possible so as to send a strong message to both sides of the conflict and the entire international community that violence must be stopped and tensions eased. The Security Council has already held much discussion on sending international observers to the region. The idea has gained more attention and support from the international community. We hope that the Israeli side will respond positively to the appeals and advice of the international community and take this recommendation into earnest consideration.

Faced with the serious situation whereby the Israeli Palestinian conflict is getting worse, we believe that efforts from a third party, especially from those with influence on both sides of the conflict, are vital to make the two sides cool down, stop violence and return to the negotiation table. This is clear to every outsider. We also believe that, as the United Nations body that shoulders the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, it is only right and natural for the Security Council to pay close attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We also support the Secretary-General in continuing to play an active role in this issue.

Finally, I would like to thank colleagues for the kind words addressed to China on its presidency last month.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): I should first like to associate my delegation with the statement that will be made on behalf of the European Union by the representative of Belgium later in the debate.

The United Kingdom is gravely concerned at the continuing violence in Israel and the occupied territories and the blockage of progress on Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

The core problem is characterized by a loss of the trust that previously existed between the parties. We have heard them both this morning. Israelis doubt that the Palestinian Authority is a true partner for peace. Equally, Palestinians doubt that Israel is willing to move forward to negotiations that stand a real chance of meeting their legitimate aspirations.

In these circumstances, the Council must demonstrate its unity and encourage the parties to focus on their clear obligations to move the process forward. Our debate today should not divide the Council. To the contrary, it is our responsibility today to send a crystal clear message to the parties of our common commitment to support efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. That message must also emphasize our total condemnation of extremism and violence as a means to achieve political ends. For it is only through dialogue that Israelis and Palestinians can achieve security and peace.

The first priority for all involved must be the implementation, as others have said, without further delay of the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, the Mitchell Committee. This integral package offers a road map, endorsed by the international community and accepted by both parties, for Israel and the Palestinian Authority to move from this crisis, through the ceasefire and confidence-building measures set out in the Committee's report, to a return to negotiations. Those negotiations should, as before, aim for a permanent settlement based on the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of "land for peace".

We call on both parties to take immediate action to de-escalate the current crisis. They can achieve this

by fulfilling the obligations they accepted when they accepted the Mitchell Committee's report. Both parties must tackle incitement to violence and both parties must bring to justice those who commit violent acts.

I have already spoken of our concern at the continuing violence in the Middle East. The United Kingdom condemns utterly all terrorist acts, including suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. There can be no excuse for targeting civilians going about their ordinary business on the streets of Israeli cities. These actions are abhorrent and, ultimately, futile. The Palestinian Authority must make a 100 per cent effort to reduce violence. That should include sustained and greater efforts to pre-empt bombings by extremists and bringing those responsible to justice.

Israel has unfulfilled obligations too. We call on the Government of Israel to show the utmost restraint in its use of force. We call for lifting the closures that cripple the Palestinian economy and prevent Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem from going about their daily lives, from working and from receiving an education. These restrictions achieve only resentment and anger, which will not help achieve a settlement. We call on Israel to transfer to the Palestinian Authority all revenues owed, to freeze all settlement activity and to fulfil its other obligations under Mitchell, without delay. We have also repeatedly called for an end to the Israeli policy of assassination of suspected Palestinian militants. That only fuels further violence and hatred.

We are concerned at the continuing closure of Orient House and other institutions in Jerusalem. We call on Israel to reverse the closure and to return the archives of Orient House without delay. It is a further setback to the prospects for peace that Orient House — which has never been a centre of terrorism and extremism, but always a resource for Palestinian engagement in negotiations — should be prevented from operating.

We call on Israel to refrain from the demolition of Palestinian houses, which risks inflaming an already volatile situation.

Finally, I want to underline that the international community has a responsibility to help the parties return to a political process to resolve their differences. We in the Council should not complicate that process, but assist it. In our discussion today, we should recognize the suffering of civilians — Israelis and Palestinians alike — and send a clear message to the parties. The basis for a settlement has eroded in the last 11 months. The parties now have a responsibility, through their words and actions, to rebuild it.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): Belgium will speak later on behalf of the European Union. France fully associates itself with what will be said by the representative of Belgium.

The situation in the Middle East, including Jerusalem, is worrisome. The escalation of violence is tragic. Since our last debate, that violence has increased further. More children died yesterday. History seems to be going backward. Two peoples are suffering and descending into a deadly, suicidal, madness. This infernal logic must end. The spirit of peace must gain the upper hand.

It is right that the Security Council should once again to be seized with these grave developments, whose tragic and deadly escalation we can only deplore. It is now high time to break with the sterile logic of force and violence and to see to it that we renew without delay a dialogue on the search for a political solution to the painful conflict that for over half a century has torn apart a region of the world that has particular emotional, historical and spiritual significance for many of us.

Our goal should be firmly to recall the rule of law, to guide the efforts of the parties and of all those helping them put an end to violence, ease tensions and regain the path of negotiations to lasting and just peace and security. We must do everything possible to harness the moral and political weight of the United Nations in support of a real dynamic of peace. That weight is not insignificant and can be very effective if we are united. At a time when peace and security are threatened, it is the responsibility of the Security Council to chart the course out of the sterile and deadly game of mutual accusations, provocations and aggression.

The Council cannot end the violence or seal a peace for the parties, but it can help and urge them to do so by facilitating existing initiatives and the efforts of the various partners of the Palestinians and the Israelis in the search for a solution — especially those of the United States, whose backing is essential, Russia, the European Union and its member States, Arab countries of good will such as Egypt and Jordan,

and the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his Special Representative.

We believe that the United Nations can make a useful contribution, given the fact that the peace negotiations have broken down and the cycle of violence is increasingly out of control. We also believe that the Security Council cannot make itself heard on such a difficult issue, or influence the course of events, unless it is united.

In order to do that, we must base ourselves on a common basis that is agreed to by all. We already have such a basis, namely, the recommendations of the Mitchell report. Our Council welcomed that report on 22 May, under the presidency of Ambassador Cunningham. It also called on the parties immediately to begin to take the necessary steps to implement the report's recommendations. Those recommendations contain all the essential elements for a return to calm and a resumption of the peace process: an end to the violence, the rebuilding of confidence and the resumption of negotiations.

The Palestinians must make a 100 per cent effort to prevent terrorist actions and shootings by civilians. Whatever its provenance, terrorism is hateful, unjustifiable and intolerable. France and the European Union have on several occasions affirmed in the strongest terms their condemnation of wanton terrorist violence and have expressed their profound sympathy for the victims and their families. By agreeing to the recommendations of the Mitchell report the Palestinian Authority committed itself to prevent terrorist acts and shootings from territory under its control.

The recommendations of the Mitchell report constitute a balance and a set of measures required of the two parties. By agreeing to those recommendations Israel, for its part, has also committed itself to an immediate and unconditional cessation of violence. The Israeli Government is mistaken if it believes that destroying houses and Palestinian agricultural crops, expropriating property, extrajudicial executions, military aggression in areas under Palestinian control and the closing and illegal occupation of Palestinian institutions and properties in the territories and in Jerusalem — such as the closing of the Orient House and the theft of its archives — will make possible a return to calm.

Committed in violation of the commitments undertaken by Israel in Madrid 10 years ago, these unilateral measures of repression taken collectively against the Palestinian people are grave violations of international law, in particular of Security Council resolution 476 (1980) and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Israel, as a Member of the United Nations, is duty-bound to respect those instruments; including in Jerusalem where, with an expectation to a final peace settlement, nothing should be done to change the status quo.

Those illegal actions must end and be rescinded. Orient House and its archives must be returned to the Palestinians without delay. Those unilateral actions only serve further to weaken the Palestinian Authority and its President, Yasser Arafat, who nevertheless remain today the necessary and obligatory interlocutors of Israel. Israel must withdraw to positions held before 28 September 2000 and stop all settlement activity in Palestinian territories, including the natural growth of existing settlements, end the closure of territories and transfer income due to the Palestinian Authority.

It would be artificial to separate security from peace. They go together. Separating them would be falling into the logic of extremism and terrorism of all stripes. Only responsible and courageous action of men and women in Palestine and Israel will see to it that those young Palestinians who have known only the closed horizon of camps will no longer live in the anguish of lack of a future and in a void of personal, professional, family and political prospects. Only courageous action on par with those great men who paid with their lives — I am thinking of Yitzhak Rabin and Anwar Sadat — can one day penetrate the shadows of vengeance, hatred, oppression and terrorism.

I would like to have a dream, one of a Middle East that is reconciled, of Palestinians living on their own territory, including Jerusalem, in the dignity of a viable, independent and democratic State to which they have a right, and of Israelis living in peace in a State with recognized and secure borders, concerned with integrating itself in a region at peace and encouraged to do so by its neighbours.

This path to peace requires a return to calm, a resumption of political dialogue among the parties and a resumption of negotiations for a just and lasting peace based on the principle of law, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. In this spirit, as we have already stated on several occasions here and elsewhere,

we believe that an impartial monitoring mechanism on the ground that is part of an extension of the work of the Mitchell Committee, as soon as it is agreed to by the parties, could help Palestinians and Israelis in their efforts to reduce tensions and could contribute to guaranteeing the results obtained.

Faced with a tragic situation, the international community and the Security Council cannot give in to despair, nor can they resign themselves to impotence. We must and we can work to bring together positive forces in favour of a restoration of a dynamic for reducing tensions and for peace in full cooperation with both parties.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): We have been witnessing in the past few weeks a dangerously escalating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and East Jerusalem. We are extremely concerned at the continuation of the alarmingly high level of violence taking place daily and causing numerous deaths and intolerable human suffering. Apart from its implications for the peace process, the situation represents a threat to peace and security in the region and warrants consideration by the Security Council in view of the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore strongly supported the request made by the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for holding an emergency meeting of the Council. We commend you, Mr. President, for responding to this call.

The Security Council, however, is not considering this issue for the first time, nor is it acting in a void. In our opinion, the Council has and must play its legitimate role in the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. In its resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000, the Council called for the establishment of a mechanism of inquiry into the tragic events of the preceding few days. The Council invited the Secretary-General to continue to follow the situation and to keep the Council informed. It may be recalled that the Council also called for the immediate resumption of negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis for achieving a final settlement of the question. These, in our view, are parameters that establish a continuing relevance for Council action on the issue.

The gravity of the situation has been stressed by previous speakers today and has also been addressed by the international community in recent days. Apart from the human suffering that the continuing violence has caused, we are gravely concerned at the unravelling of what remains of the Middle East peace process. The dynamic of events, on the one hand, and the unilateral policy of applying military force, on the other, have unmistakably contributed to this unravelling.

The cycle of violence has apparently resisted efforts to stop it. The reasons are not very far to seek. Maintaining the economic blockades and closures, destruction and other illegal measures in the occupied territories and continuation of the settlement activities are factors that stand in the way of ending violence. The Council should address this issue carefully. While the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee — the Mitchell Committee — report clearly enumerated recommendations for the parties, we have seen attempts to avoid their implementation.

As has been done in various other forums recently, the Council should emphasize that the full implementation of the recommendations of the Fact-finding Committee, without any preconditions, is of crucial importance at the present time. Unfortunately, recent events on the ground are not giving encouraging signs for achieving that objective. The international community has made valuable investment in the peace process, in particular following the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting. We recognize and welcome these efforts at mediation. It is expected of the sponsors of these efforts to remain engaged, especially in view of the serious deterioration in the situation that threatens the agreed basis of the peace process.

We are firmly of the view that the current volatile situation calls for a continued and more intimate involvement of the international community. Bangladesh strongly endorses, therefore, the idea of establishment of a monitoring mechanism to help the parties implement the recommendations of the Committee. There is no scope to confuse the purpose of this mechanism. Clearly, allegations and counter-allegations about the bona fides of one side or the other have gone on for long enough. The time has come for all to realize that the parties need help in achieving what they have failed to achieve so far on their own.

Both sides have agreed to the full and comprehensive implementation of the Committee's recommendations. The Council should do its part to help them achieve that objective by establishing a monitoring mechanism of an international character.

Such a mechanism would have the advantage of impartially establishing the factors acting against ending the current cycle of violence, monitoring the efforts employed by parties in line with the recommendations and exerting, as a consequence, the much-needed calming influence on the situation.

Bangladesh commends the initiatives of the Secretary-General in recent months, including his visit to the region in June, as a part of his ongoing efforts to find a political solution to the crisis based on relevant United Nations resolutions. We fully endorsed the stated objective of his visit, that is, to press the two parties to implement in their entirety the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee. We particularly welcome his efforts during his visit to nudge the parties towards an early resumption of negotiations. We feel that he correctly emphasized the need for political contact between the parties beyond security talks. He also recognized that the international community should work with them to get them into the logic of implementation of the Mitchell plan.

We see in today's discussion the Council's responsibility, its mandate and also, in line with earlier resolutions, its obligations. We believe that the Council should call on the parties to desist from actions that contradict the spirit of the recent ceasefire agreement. Despite the widespread violence that marked the ceasefire, we believe that it remains the point of departure for any meaningful action.

However, along with the measures that the Tenet work plan outlines, there must also be commensurate action taken at the political level — actions that will affect the situation on the ground. The Israeli policy of collective punishment and targeted killings, economic blockades and deprivation and, most recently, measures such as occupation of the Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in and around occupied East Jerusalem are, in the first place, actions that must be reversed — not only because these are illegal, but also because these actions have contributed to the deterioration of an already fragile situation and aggravated the crisis of confidence between the parties.

What the Israeli policy has achieved by economically strangulating the Palestinian people and their economy has been well documented. The Secretary-General's report of 6 July 2001 to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, under the item of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly entitled "Strengthening of the coordination and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", mentions, "severe internal and external closures ... [that have] resulted in large-scale losses to the Palestinian economy, wiping out more than three years of prior growth" (A/56/123-E/2001/97, para. 5).

With a 50-per-cent income loss and with unemployment tripled, the impact on the livelihood of the Palestinian people has been devastating. In his conclusions, the Secretary-General argues in favour of a resumption of political activity leading towards a just settlement and of economic activity leading to an improvement of living conditions. That provides a useful perspective for action by the Council. We support the appeal to the international donor community to extend economic and financial assistance to the Palestinian people, and we acknowledge the crucial role it has been playing in laying the foundations for the viability and sustainability of the Palestinian economy. We call on Israel to reverse the policy of closures and economic blockades and to transfer without delay the revenue it is withholding from the Palestinian authority in contravention of signed agreements.

The reality of the current situation demands concerted action in the Council. Lack of unanimity, however, should not be used as an argument for Council inaction on this issue. We would strongly urge all concerned to evaluate the situation from the standpoint of what is expected of the Council in such a situation. In our view, the Council has a responsibility to call for the immediate implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations and for the launching of a viable political process. We believe the current situation, if left to the momentum it has generated, is unlikely to lead to any fruitful outcome. The language of force must be replaced with the language of peace. The painful reality remains that no such possibility exists as long as the policy of systematic, unilateral military action is in place in contravention of norms of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Security Council should support the idea of establishing a monitoring mechanism.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): This meeting of the Security Council is taking place at an extremely grave and sensitive time, when the occupied

Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, are the target of the most serious Israeli practices since last year's provocation at Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The sharp deterioration in the situation of the Palestinian people has reached a frightening level.

Despite its responsibility for international peace and security, the Security Council has not been able fully to shoulder that responsibility. That has sent the wrong message to the Israeli authorities and has made it possible for them to continue their practices against the Palestinian people, their holy sites, their property and their economic infrastructure. Today's meeting reflects the urgent need — long promoted by the international community — to put an end to this serious escalation, which, owing to the presence of Israeli occupying troops, has been transformed into a policy of reacting to events rather than fully respecting international norms with a view to ending the cycle of violence.

The Israeli Government is facing off against the Palestinian people and deliberately and systematically taking retaliatory measures that run counter to the most basic human values and the norms of international law — not to mention human dignity and human rights — as reflected in the report of Ms. Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Israeli Government refuses to abide by Security Council resolutions or by international law, not to speak of agreements entered into during the peace process, from Madrid to Sharm el-Sheikh. Its current policy reveals its true colours; that policy is to appear to be a victim in a constant self-defensive posture. How can we accept such a deception, when the goal of the Israeli war machine has been to use every means, including internationally prohibited weapons, to strike Palestinian cities and people, and to starve the Palestinians, confiscate their property, violate their rights, desecrate their holy places and even occupy Orient House in occupied Jerusalem along with other Palestinian institutions with legal standing under agreements signed by both parties.

Israel's arrogance has increased to the point where it is now carrying out a policy of physically liquidating Palestinian officials at a time when the Palestinian people is engaged in forms of resistance that fully accord with international law. The goal is to usurp the internationally recognized legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and to pursue the occupation of its territory.

Now, the Security Council and the international community at large must react to the highly dangerous situation in the area. The Council must take firm action to put an end once and for all to dilatory, ambiguous Israeli policies aimed at circumventing Council resolutions and agreements signed between the Palestinians and the Israeli Government. The Council must put pressure on Israel to choose dialogue and peace.

Irrespective of the magnitude of Israel's war machine and the scale of its arrogance, the legitimate rights of the Palestinians will not simply fade away. Israel's policy of dominating the Palestinian people and thwarting its aspirations will not succeed. The sacrifices made daily by the Palestinian people bear witness to the fact that it is determined to pursue its legitimate struggle to create an independent State on its own territory, with Jerusalem as its capital.

My delegation once again affirms that peace is the only way. There must be respect for negotiations in line with international legitimacy if the Middle East is to break the downward spiral of violence that bears such great risk and that could spin out of control if we wait too long to take action.

At its special Cairo meeting and at the 2001 Arab Summit Conference, the League of Arab States voiced its unswerving support for peace as a strategic option. The Palestinian people is committed to the peace option and to the resumption of negotiations at the point where they left off, on the basis of international legitimacy and recognition of all norms and principles on the basis of which the peace process was founded at Madrid in 1991. In the face of this dilemma, the international community must adopt a non-selective approach. All of us — especially the permanent members of the Security Council — must abide by existing resolutions in order to find a just solution to the Palestinian problem, and must no longer permit the Israeli side to evade its obligations.

At the Cairo and Amman Arab Summit Conferences, President Ben Ali called for protection for the Palestinian people. This was called for also at the recent Genoa meeting of the Group of Eight. In the light of the Israeli Government's policies, protecting the Palestinian people is now imperative. We must send international observers to protect Palestinian civilians, to whom the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, applies. We repeat our demand for a

meeting of the High Contracting Parties of that Convention to make the occupying Power, Israel, face up to its obligations vis-à-vis Palestinian civilians.

We should adopt all the important recommendations devised by the Mitchell Committee in Sharm el-Sheikh. They could bring the cycle of violence to an end, put an end to the policy of settlements, and provide protection for the Palestinian people. We must also emphasize the need to set up a monitoring mechanism in order to implement the Mitchell recommendations properly, as well as the recommendations of the G-8 group in order to create a climate favourable to the resumption of negotiations.

The occupation of Orient House and numerous other Palestinian institutions having legal status and subject to the Palestinian Authority is an important and serious setback in the process.

There can be no fair, comprehensive and equitable peace in the region without the creation of a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, or without the withdrawal of Israel from the Golan Heights and the occupied Lebanese territories. My delegation underscores the importance for the international community, particularly the Security Council, to take up its responsibilities in order to protect the life and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and to prevent any further risks in the region that are a threat to peace and security.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): The conflict in the Middle East has entered a dangerous new phase. The cycle of violence has reached alarming levels and appears poised to spiral out of control. The grave situation is a matter of concern to the entire international community and demands the urgent attention of the Security Council.

Singapore deplores in the strongest terms all acts of terror. We are deeply disappointed that the violence and provocative acts have continued unabated and indeed escalated, despite the various mediation efforts, including that of the Secretary-General. Now more than ever, the parties need outside help to climb down from the cycle of violence.

Singapore is prepared to listen to any proposals that help to ease tensions, lead to the cessation of violence and hostilities, bring both parties back to the negotiating table, and ultimately advance the prospects of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We believe that the report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, the Mitchell report, represents the best hope in providing the parties with a common framework to take reciprocal steps to ease tensions and cease hostilities. It is comprehensive, fair and objective. More importantly, both parties have embraced its recommendations.

Unfortunately, the glimmer of hope provided by the Mitchell report has waned as violence becomes more entrenched. What is needed is an urgent and renewed effort to kick-start its full and immediate implementation.

Singapore believes that the Security Council should examine what it could do to help implement the Mitchell report. There are already intensive ongoing efforts by key parties, including the United States and regional countries, and the Security Council should support and bolster these efforts. The Council should consider asking the Secretary-General, who was instrumental in convening the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting, to assist in the implementation of the Mitchell report.

For the Security Council to make a real and constructive impact on this volatile situation, we strongly believe that it is important for it to act in a unified manner on this critical issue. The credibility of the Council is at stake. An unequivocal and unified message from the Council would exert the strongest possible influence on the parties involved.

At the end of the day, it is the parties involved that must make their own strategic decision to eschew violence and return to the peace track. There is clearly no alternative to discussing issues of security, borders and statehood except through negotiations on the basis of the principles of non-acquisition of territory by the use of force and of the right of States to live within secure and recognized borders. The further the parties stray, the more these principles would be undermined. The faster we help the two sides implement the Mitchell report, the sooner we can stop the violence and end the senseless loss of life.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): My delegation remains deeply concerned over the escalating violence in the Middle East, which has exacted a high toll of casualties and deaths, mostly among Palestinian civilians. For

almost a year now, violence has continued to ravage the occupied Palestinian territories and is becoming more intense. The increasing violence not only shatters the confidence in the peace process, but also compromises the sacrifice, time and energy invested so far in the quest for peace and security in the region.

The extrajudicial killings of Palestinians by the Israeli forces are proceeding at a dangerously accelerated rate. This practice is unacceptable and must be condemned. The situation on the ground today has become alarming and explosive. Hundreds of innocent victims, including children and women from both the Palestinian and Israeli sides, continue to suffer because of the apparent inability and failure by the international community to take the necessary steps to stem the violence. The death toll only continues to rise day after day. Loss of life in any situation is tragic, but when loss of life is avoidable, it becomes immoral.

Prospects for a durable peace in the Middle East have been seriously jeopardized by recent events. If appropriate steps are not taken promptly, there is a high risk that the entire Middle East will be embroiled in a full-scale war. No one wishes this to happen.

We at the Security Council need to assume our responsibilities. Several Council resolutions continue to remain unimplemented, and peace in the Middle East still remains elusive. Today, the eyes of the international community are once more focused on the Security Council, which under the United Nations Charter has the responsibility to intervene and stop the situation from deteriorating any further. The Council has no option but to remain actively engaged and undertake the necessary action to contain the ongoing violence and encourage confidence-building measures between the two parties so that the peace talks may resume.

My delegation urges Israel to put an end to all acts of violence and targeted assassinations. Mauritius strongly condemns the excessive and indiscriminate use of force and violence against the Palestinian people. We also strongly condemn the Israeli occupation of Orient House in East Jerusalem and the closure of other buildings belonging to the Palestinian Authority. Orient House is a symbol of peace and of the very dignity of the Palestinian people; its occupation by Israel is unacceptable. These unwarranted Israeli acts, which are flagrant violations of past agreements signed by the two sides, would further undermine prospects for reviving the peace process and would constitute a deliberate act of provocation. Unless such practices are immediately halted, there will be a further radicalization of the Palestinians. All acts of provocation should stop.

We join our voice to the call made by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for Israel to immediately end its occupation of Orient House and other Palestinian buildings. Both Israel and Palestine should exercise the highest degree of restraint and act responsibly in order not to exacerbate the situation any further.

In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the blockades imposed by Israel have only further worsened the sufferings of the Palestinian people and resulted in untold daily hardship to the residents in the Palestine-controlled areas. The blockade has cost the Palestinian economy millions of dollars; unemployment has soared, and hundreds of thousand of people are struggling for their survival. It goes without saying that unemployment, misery and frustration are breeding grounds for more violent actions. We call upon Israel to immediately remove all the blockades so that the Palestinian people may resume their normal activities.

My delegation is reminded of the remarks made seven years ago by the late Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, that Israelis and Palestinians are destined to live together on the same soil, in the same land. The establishment of an independent state of Palestine, together with the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), are the only safeguards for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine and in the Middle East region. Israel, too, has the right to exist within secure borders.

Since November last year, the Non-Aligned Movement caucus of the Security Council has relentlessly undertaken efforts to move the Council to establish a United Nations observer force to provide protection to the Palestinian people. We are convinced that, had the Council agreed to the deployment of such an observer force, the situation would not be as it is today.

Over the past 23 years, several milestones have been reached in the protracted peace process. Beginning from the Camp David Accords in 1978, we moved to the Madrid Conference, the Oslo peace

agreements and the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings of October 2000. Each time we have expressed hope, confidence and expectations that peace will finally be within reach, but each time there has been disappointment. Now we have the Mitchell report, which provides a viable process for a peaceful settlement. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity.

The acceptance of the Mitchell report four months ago by both sides created expectations which, unfortunately, have not been realized. Time has been lost, but no more time should be lost. The report offers a sensible and coherent foundation for resolving the crisis and resuming meaningful negotiations.

Mauritius believes that both sides should look forward to, and promptly consider adopting, the confidence-building measures recommended by the Mitchell report. We appeal to both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government to put an end to the cycle of violence and return to the negotiating table. In this regard, we wish to commend all the efforts undertaken so far by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to narrow down the differences between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders. We encourage the Secretary-General, as well as the leaders of the region and those of the European Union, the United States and the Russian Federation, to pursue their efforts to break the deadlock.

We also endorse the statement made by the Group of Eight in Genoa, Italy, which reaffirmed that the implementation of the Mitchell report was the way forward to break the deadlock, stop the escalation of violence and resume the political process. It is clear that in the case of such an impasse, the international community should provide all possible assistance and avenues to the two sides to stop the violence and resume the peace talks.

My delegation supports the idea of creating a monitoring mechanism that would help the two parties to implement the Mitchell report. This is the only way for us to ensure that the recommendations of the report are respected and implemented. My delegation would support such an initiative, if the matter were to be considered by the Council, and we call upon all members to give serious consideration to this course of action.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): I would like, first, to associate my delegation with the statement to be made later in this debate by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

It is a matter of the deepest concern and regret to the Government and the people of Ireland that prospects for a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have receded in recent months; that violence has dangerously escalated; that the excessive and disproportionate use of force is almost daily causing the deaths of innocent civilians; that people are again dying in indiscriminate bombing attacks; and that commitments entered into by the parties, instead of being built upon, are being reversed.

In view of the increasing spiral of violence and of what, at times, seem deliberately provocative acts, as well as the apparent absence of direction in the peace process, it is fully appropriate for the Council once again to address the issue. Furthermore, the Council cannot ignore the fact that long-standing resolutions remain unfulfilled.

When we last spoke in the Council on this issue, on 15 March, Ireland, together with many other delegations, said that the disproportionate use of force by Israel, instead of stabilizing the situation, would merely aggravate it further. We and others also emphasized that attacks on Israeli civilians, in addition to being utterly wrong in themselves, would do nothing to bring about the justice desired and deserved by the Palestinian people, and would in fact put off the day when they can begin to live their lives in freedom and dignity.

It is unfortunate that the warnings given at that time by Security Council delegations — delegations that have the interests of both parties at heart — were not heeded. Violence and provocation have been taken to new levels and the parties are no longer engaged in dialogue. Instead, a corrosive cycle of mutual misunderstanding, ritual condemnation and fear is filling the vacuum left by the ending of substantive dialogue. It is a deeply dangerous and untenable situation.

The present situation is all the more regrettable because, since our last meeting on this issue, the recommendations in the report of the Sharm el-Sheikh fact-finding committee, chaired by Senator George Mitchell, pointed with clarity and imagination to the way forward. On 22 May, the members of the Security Council called on the parties immediately to begin the

steps required to implement those recommendations, including those on confidence-building measures.

It is now well past time that the obstacles to the implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report were removed. Effective and immediate steps must be taken to bring an end to acts of violence, and the report sets out clearly what is required of the Palestinian Authority in that regard. However, it is not helpful to impose unilateral conditions for the commencement of the implementation of the Mitchell recommendations; that would impose a veto on progress, as those who are bent on wrecking the peace process want.

Neither is it helpful for one party to commit itself only to part of the process. Of course, it is very important for a cessation of violence to be achieved and maintained. However, we made the point in March, and we emphasize it again today, that the current phase of violence arises primarily out of the frustration to which the long years of occupation have given rise. The Mitchell report refers to the humiliation and frustration that Palestinians must endure every day as a result of living with the continuing effects of occupation. In such conditions, without the prospect of a fair and honourable settlement at the end of the process, the calm necessary for the resumption of dialogue is unlikely to be achieved.

The Mitchell report also underlines the difficulties that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories — settlements which the entire international community holds to be illegal — have presented to the peace process. It is long past time that the Israeli authorities unambiguously committed themselves to a freeze on settlement construction activity.

On 9 August, a horrific bomb attack took place in Jerusalem. Other such attacks have taken place, which could have, but fortunately did not, lead to a similar death toll. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, in condemning that attack, said that the commitments given by the sides to secure a cessation of violence and to implement the recommendations of the Mitchell report must be observed, and he stressed how much there was to be lost by sinking ever deeper into the spiral of attack and retaliation. He said that negotiation towards a comprehensive peace settlement offered the only hope of a way out of the current spiral of violence and the dreadful prospect of a wider conflict in the region.

The Irish authorities are gravely concerned at the closure of Orient House, which has in recent years become a symbol of the Palestinian people's aspirations to sovereignty, and of other institutions in occupied East Jerusalem, as well as at the incursions into territory which under the interim agreements had been transferred to the control of the Palestinian Authority.

We fully understand the depth of feeling that existed in Israel after the horrific suicide bombing attacks. We fully accept that the Israeli authorities have a right and duty to protect the public. However, an action against Palestinian institutions, and against symbols of nationhood important to Palestinians, is an action against a people as a whole, not just against their leadership, and certainly not against terrorists. Such actions do not serve the interests of peace. As the European Union stated, they run counter to the declared objective, which must remain the restoration of security for all.

Also running counter to this objective are the other collective punishments against the Palestinian people: the closures and restrictions on movement, with the resulting devastating impact on the Palestinian people and the Palestinian economy; the withholding of due revenue, resulting in the disastrous financial condition of the Palestinian Authority; and the extrajudicial killings. None of this will bring peace. None of these things will bring one day closer, for Israel, secure borders recognized by its neighbours.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the public at large, in the region and outside of it, to understand why the international community — which is increasingly ready to intervene quickly and effectively on other issues of international peace and security — is apparently helpless to do anything effective in response to the growing crisis in the Middle East.

In his statement of 9 August, the Foreign Minister of Ireland stated that recent events underlined the urgent need for a third-party monitoring mechanism, which, at this critical time, would serve the interests of both parties.

Ireland also welcomes the statement made by the G-8 on 19 July, which reaffirmed that full implementation of the Mitchell report was the only way forward, outlined the elements necessary for a cooling-off period and said that third-party monitoring accepted

by both parties would serve their interests in implementing the report.

Grave psychological barriers exist to a resumption of dialogue. This was clear in March, when Deputy Prime Minister Peres referred to them in stark terms in this Chamber. It is even clearer now. We have made appeals to the parties here today, but the breakthrough that is needed, as in many other conflicts, requires outside mediators that have the trust of both parties. My delegation supports the calls that have been made for the resumption of active and effective mediation.

Is any delegation here ready to declare that the Middle East peace process cannot be revived? An enormous amount has been achieved since the first peace conference was convened in Madrid 10 years ago, and since the Declaration of Principles was signed eight years ago. There have been mistakes and setbacks, and the process has suffered grievously from a lack of continuity. A clear message must go out from this meeting of the Security Council that too much has been achieved and the stakes for both parties and for the region as a whole are too great to throw it all away. My delegation therefore welcomes recent reports of moves by Deputy Prime Minister Peres to reopen dialogue with representatives of the Palestinian Authority.

Building peace in the region is, in the end, about building conditions of justice; about removing threats and affronts to justice; about achieving psychological as well as physical security as preconditions for true peace; about tackling what can only be described as a bondage of fear — in all its aspects — that seems at time to overwhelm wiser judgements and counsels. After 10 months of violence and instability, the message of the Council to both parties must be to offer the full and active support of the international community to help them to turn once again to the only possible way forward: dialogue and peace-building.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): The conflict in the Middle East can never be resolved by military means. We understand the Israeli desire for security. But the Palestinians too have a right to security and development. The only way for the Israelis and the Palestinians to ensure the security they both want is to embark on the road to peace. This road will be hard and painful, but at the end of the day, there will have to be a solution to the conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Norway condemns terrorism in all its forms. We must not let the actions of extremists dictate the agenda. The perpetrators of violence must be brought to justice in accordance with the law. Any other approach will only be an incitement to further violence. And while violence is being reduced, confidence has to be built.

As a member of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, my minister has worked with the parties and the United States to break the present impasse. We were pleased to note that both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority endorsed the recommendations in the Mitchell report. However, implementation has been hampered by new acts of violence and the new conditions that have been set.

Norway understands that Israeli leaders do not wish to be perceived as "rewarding terrorism". We also understand that Palestinian leaders do not wish to be perceived as "rewarding occupation". But if the cycle is to be broken, political risks must be taken. Norway urges the leaders in the Middle East to carry out a very hard task in political terms: to lead without knowing how many will follow.

The Committee described the road back to negotiations very clearly. The principal message to the Middle East leaders was that they must end the violence, rebuild confidence and resume negotiations.

Both Israel and the Palestinians must follow up the recommendations of the Mitchell report and implement them as they are. Both parties must also do their utmost to show maximum restraint and de-escalate the situation. In particular, it is important to avoid and rectify all unilateral acts that have a negative impact on agreements previously entered into by the parties.

Norway supports the idea of establishing a third-party presence that can monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Mitchell report recommendations, and Norway calls on the parties to avail themselves of such a mechanism.

Norway also strongly supports the Tenet security arrangements, which aim at securing a comprehensive ceasefire and re-establishing serious cooperation on security issues. However, a ceasefire cannot be

sustained unless there is also a political process leading to the resumption of negotiations.

Nine months of violence and recurrent closures have had a very severe impact on the Palestinian economy. In its capacity as chairman of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, Norway has, together with the World Bank and the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO), initiated a study to assess the present situation. The findings of the study will guide the international donor community in its future actions.

The principal task facing the international community today must be to encourage the parties to end the violence, implement the ceasefire and start rebuilding trust. We must stand united in this approach. Agreement within the Security Council is essential.

Mr. Kulyk (Ukraine): The tragic course of events in the Middle East is viewed with deep concern in Ukraine. Particularly disturbing is that the new flare-up of violence in the Palestinian territory and within Israel is resulting in numerous additional victims among the innocent civilian population, and it is increasingly aggravating the situation in the entire region. We were really shocked at the recent series of bloody acts of violence that caused new loss of lives and injuries among Palestinians and Israelis and almost shattered the slim hopes for the resumption of peace negotiations between them. My country deplores and condemns all these acts of violence and expresses condolences to the families of their innocent victims.

On 2 and 9 August 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine released statements in this regard. These statements underline in particular that the entire history of the conflict in the Middle East, as well as the current course of events in the region, proves that the problem cannot be solved by force. There can be no excuse for the excessive use of force or for acts of terrorism, irrespective of their motivations. Violence begets new violence; it brings alienation and animosity to relations between the two sides and makes the prospect for a settlement of the conflict more remote.

Ukraine calls upon both sides to undertake resolute and immediate measures to achieve a ceasefire and stop bloodshed, to prevent a further escalation of violence and create the necessary favourable preconditions for returning to the negotiating table. We believe that the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee constitute a solid basis for finding a way out of the ongoing crisis in the Middle East and for the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiating process.

The current situation requires that the Israeli and Palestinian leadership act with redoubled prudence, flexibility and realism. It is necessary for them to demonstrate the utmost restraint, political resolve and will to reach mutually acceptable and constructive decisions.

The events of the most recent weeks on the ground are particularly disturbing. The situation is steadily deteriorating, characterized by the ever increasing dynamics of attacks and counter-attacks, growing extremism and hatred. It looks like the vicious circle of mutual violence and vengeance is unbreakable. It is truly regrettable that the United States-assisted ceasefire agreement has not been able to halt the daily bloodshed and shun violence.

It is our firm conviction that the continuous practice of deliberate killings of pre-selected Palestinian individuals and devastating tank raids into the Palestinian-controlled territory should cease.

We also believe that effective control should be exercised over the Palestinian radical elements in order to the stop the practice of suicide bombings and terrorist attacks and reduce incitements and provocations.

We are also convinced that the earliest resumption of effective cooperation between the two parties in the field of security, as well as of their broad contacts at all levels in general, will substantially help in de-escalating the violence and in coming back to the final status talks.

In the current circumstances on the ground, we see merit in the idea of the international monitoring mechanism to assist the parties in implementing the Mitchell Committee recommendations. In our view, it deserves further careful consideration and could contribute to the protection of civilians.

Ukraine remains fully supportive of the individual and joint efforts of the co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, as well as those of all international players involved in the process of seeking ways to forestall the ongoing regional crisis. My country welcomes the diplomatic efforts made by the European Union to that end. We are also pleased with the active role of the United Nations Secretary-General

and his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in the current situation, and we encourage them to continue their activities.

For its part, Ukraine is determined to continue its contribution to the cause of achieving general stability in the Middle East and of bringing about a final resolution of the Palestinian question.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Colombia.

We support this open debate of the Security Council, and we are participating in it in the most constructive spirit and with the sincere hope of contributing to creating conditions that will make possible the end of violence in the Middle East and the resumption of negotiations between the parties as soon as possible. We are also doing this because we have always maintained that the Security Council can and must act when there are threats to international peace and security, in full accordance with the responsibilities attributed to the Council by the Charter.

This is the context in which we would like to raise a few concepts related to the sensitive situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. Our statements are pervaded by an awareness of the need to exercise the greatest serenity and caution possible, avoiding in all instances aggravation of an already volatile situation.

The situation in the Middle East has fallen into a spiral of violence that is not favourable to anyone. The excessive use of force by Israel, which indiscriminately affects the Palestinian population, as well as the selective assassination of Palestinian individuals, are practices that do not contribute to the cause of peace. Similarly, terrorist attacks attributed to extremist groups that have indiscriminately affected the civil population are also unacceptable.

The occupation of Orient House in Jerusalem and of other buildings of Palestinian institutions in the surrounding area by Israeli forces also deserves international condemnation. It involves facts with significant political meaning that flout previous agreements between the parties and delay confidence-building between them. We call upon the Government of Israel to withdraw from these installations.

The economic situation of the Palestinian people also does not contribute to the creation of favourable conditions for a genuine peace process. We wish to appeal to the international community to help the Palestinian people financially, and to Israel to put an end to the blockades and restrictions that are stifling the precarious Palestinian economy.

It has been reported that the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process has said that more than one third of Palestinians live below the poverty threshold. The same source has categorized the blockade, the worst since those imposed in 1967, as the cause of a shortfall in the Palestinian Authority's finances that reached 22 per cent of its total budget at the end of 2000.

We believe that the recommendations of the Mitchell report of 30 April 2001 are urgent and must be supported and fully implemented, in particular those referring to the cessation of violence, the reaffirmation of the commitments undertaken by the parties to date and the implementation of confidence-building measures to facilitate the resumption of negotiations.

We recognize that the international community has taken various initiatives to bring about these very objectives. Colombia fully supports these efforts and encourages the involved actors of the international community not to desist. But in so doing, we would like to point out our concern about the scarce results produced since the beginning of this phase of the violence in September 2000 in the Middle East.

We believe that the Security Council therefore has a role that must be assumed responsibly to prevent greater polarization between the parties and to contribute to helping them find alternative solutions to the escalating violence. We see the Council's task as an effort that is in accord with and complementary to those carried out by other actors of the international community, including, of course, the actions of the Secretary-General. Therefore, we believe that Council action should essentially be oriented towards full implementation of the Mitchell report recommendations. This document was welcomed by the members of the Council on 22 May 2001. This can be achieved only if we act in unison, protected by the strength provided by solid political consensus among all members.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I am confident that your wisdom, experience and expertise will lead the work of the Council to the desired success.

My delegation also wishes to avail itself of the opportunity to express its appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Wang Yingfan, the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China, for the efficient manner in which he managed the work of the Council under his presidency. We also wish to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this important emergency meeting to consider the dangerous and tragic developments unfolding in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

The Council is meeting today at one of the most critical stages of the Palestinian people's struggle to regain their fundamental rights in accordance with international legitimacy. That people —men, women and children — are suffering at the hands of the Israeli forces. The time has come for international legitimacy to be respected by all States and Governments, without double standards. Doing so would help to uphold the rule of law and ensure equality and justice without discrimination for all peoples of the world.

What is taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories is a clear and flagrant breach by Israel of the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to torture, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights legal instruments, including the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. All of these apply to Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

The Palestinian people, who demand their legitimate rights to life and national sovereignty, are facing daily confrontations between their young people and one of the best equipped armies of the world — an army that employs heavy tanks, armed personnel carriers and helicopter gunships in a very unbalanced and inhumane manner. The daily raids launched by Israel against Palestinian buildings and institutions and its arrogant and excessive use of force against the unarmed Palestinian people, who have only their souls to defend their homeland with, have made Palestinians more determined to continue their struggle and their uprising against the occupation by Israel that blocks the way towards permanent peace with the Palestinians.

Late on Friday, 10 August 2001, Israeli security forces raided Orient House and other Palestinian properties in and around occupied East Jerusalem. They confiscated important Palestinian archives, including maps and titles to Palestinian properties. Furthermore, the Israeli occupation forces used excessive force to change the status quo of Abu Dis, near East Jerusalem. These actions represent a serious escalation in the bloody military campaign launched by Israel against the Palestinian people since September 2000 — not to mention Israel's military invasion of Jenin with tanks.

In its capacity as the current Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the State of Qatar has, among other things, expressed its condemnation and denunciation of Israel's occupation of Orient House in East Jerusalem. It considers such acts a flagrant breach and serious violation of all the agreements between the Palestinians and the Israelis, a manifestation of the collapse of the peace process and testimony to Israel's violation of all international laws and norms. It has also called on the international community strongly to condemn such acts, and has called on the Security Council and the United Nations to shoulder their responsibilities by taking action to halt such inequitable and unwarranted Israeli practices. This position was announced in an official communiqué of the Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs that was issued as an official document of the Security Council and the General Assembly under the symbol A/55/1027-S/2001/784.

Qatar also made the same official statement on 30 July 2001 to express its condemnation and denunciation of the dangerous Israeli escalation illustrated by the decision of an extremist religious group to lay a cornerstone for an alleged temple at Al-Haram Al-Sharif. That act was regarded as a provocation to religious sentiment and as an effort to violate the sanctity of Islamic Holy Places and the heritage of human civilization. It was also considered an act of wanton aggression against all holy sites. This was an affront to the sentiments of Arab and Muslim peoples throughout the world, an act that fuelled the deterioration of the situation in the region.

In that regard, the State of Qatar has appealed to the international community, and to the Security Council and its permanent members in particular, to shoulder their responsibilities to prevent such provocations. Furthermore, the State of Qatar, in its capacity as the current Chairman of the OIC, has stressed its support for the Palestinian people in its just struggle to regain its land and legitimate rights in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace. It has also called on Israel to respond to all international initiatives and efforts in the interest of peace, security and stability in the Middle East. That statement was also issued as an official document of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

In that connection, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the Ninth Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, called for an emergency meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Conference. That meeting was held on 26 May 2001 at Doha, Qatar, to discuss the highly dangerous conditions facing the Palestinian people as a result of ongoing escalating Israeli aggression. The meeting heard an important speech by His Highness and held extensive deliberations and negotiations on the content of the declaration of the Ninth Islamic Summit entitled "The Al-Aqsa Uprising: An Uprising for an Independent Palestine".

Concerned about the possibility of a further deterioration in the security situation endangering the entire region, and in an effort to provide protection for the Palestinian people against serious and oppressive Israeli practices, the conference decided to call on the Security Council to hold an emergency meeting to determine the steps necessary to provide international protection to the Palestinians from wanton Israeli aggression and to calm the situation and work towards a resumption of negotiations aimed at a just and comprehensive settlement that ensures a return of peace to the entire Middle East.

The Summit charged His Highness the Emir of Qatar and the follow-up ministerial committee established by him to immediately resume their work by calling for the holding of an emergency meeting of the Security Council to consider the serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and to provide the necessary international protection to the Palestinian people and to implement relevant Security Council resolutions on Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The committee was also instructed to be permanently seized of the matter.

Responding to a request submitted by Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr al-Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the ministerial committee, on the basis of instructions from His Highness the Emir, the Security Council met on 27 November 2000 to examine Israeli actions against the Palestinian people. In a speech to the Security Council, the Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar stressed the urgent need for the international community, and for the Security Council in particular, to take immediate measures to provide international protection for the Palestinian people, to end the ongoing campaign of violence, murder and destruction against them, to ensure the safety and sanctity of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and to enable the Palestinian people to gain their national rights. He emphasized that future peace and prosperity in the Middle East is contingent upon the Council's decision, bearing in mind the responsibility conferred upon it by the conscience of mankind.

In this context, we reiterated in that statement by His Excellency the Foreign Minister the need to provide international protection to the Palestinian people and to condemn the acts of violence committed by the Israeli forces, as well as their excessive use of force, which led to a high number of casualties and extensive damage to property. We call upon Israel, as the occupying Power, to strictly comply with its legally binding responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. We also called for the immediate resumption of peace negotiations in the Middle East, in accordance with the agreements made so far, in order to avoid further deterioration of the situation. We also called for total compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Otherwise, the authority of the United Nations and its credibility would be severely undermined. We further emphasized that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) still represented a viable framework for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that infringing upon religious holy places, in particular Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and other holy sites that have a special place in the hearts of every Muslim, as well as the endeavour to change the legal, demographic, urban,

traditional and cultural status of the Holy City constitute an outrageous affront to the sentiments of more than a billion Muslims all over the world. That could be the spark that would burn any hope for peace in the region. Therefore, Al-Quds Al-Sharif is still at the heart of any comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. There can be no peace in the Middle East unless and until the Palestinian people regain their legitimate rights, including the right of having an independent state, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, and in exercising total sovereignty over Al-Haram Al-Sharif of Al-Quds.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Qatar for his statement and his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. I am particularly pleased to see a diplomat of your talent, your competence and your experience taking over at the head of the Council, whose summer break seems not at all to have lightened our agenda or reduced our responsibilities, from another brilliant diplomat, Ambassador Wang of China, who, through the remarkable manner in which he carried out his term of office, has done credit to the Organization.

Actually, if there were to be one region in the world that would draw the urgent attention of the Security Council in the month of August, it would be the Middle East, where we see under way a tragedy that is fraught with threats and perils, in the face of which the international community would seem once again to be especially powerless and helpless, if not resigned.

From rejection to rejection, from repression to repression, from one crisis to another, frustration has ended up taking hold over hope, and the dynamic for peace, which very recently seemed hopeful, has today been broken for good.

The spirit of Oslo — which had continued to be felt despite the odds and in spite of the accumulated disappointments, backsliding, non-respect for commitments entered into, exactions and brutalities committed against people without defence and assassinations targeting Palestinian militants — has become so frayed these past weeks that it seems surrealistic to continue to talk about a peace process and even more so about its eventual resurrection.

The untold repression against the Palestinian people, which has been besieged with its back to the wall, submitted to all types of intimidation and humiliation, deprived of its freedom of speech and movement, bombarded with shells and rockets and missiles and given over to the deadly madness of tanks and fighter planes and helicopters, has defeated the final hopes for peace and has installed lasting violence, disarray and anguish in the region.

It is in spite of the appeals to moderation and restraint that have increased in recent weeks from all capitals throughout the world, from Moscow to Washington, Brussels to Pretoria, that the Israeli leaders continue, without any second thoughts or remorse, their campaign of terrorism against the Palestinian people, by pillaging their houses and their property, assassinating their children and threatening the Palestinian Authority, which they continue to weaken and destroy while insisting that it continue to contain and suppress the hopes of its people.

No public or private place and no religious or secular site have been spared. The site of the Palestinian Authority in Abu Dis, the police commissariats, the public buildings and private residences, and most recently the Orient House, a highly symbolic place of the Palestinian soul and identity, if there ever was one, have all been targeted, destroyed, closed or occupied by Israeli forces of aggression. Everything today has become a pretext for incursions and aggressions against Palestinian cities, incapable of defending themselves against the onslaught of troops and of tanks and artillery, which each and every time suffocates and stifles them. Actually, a number of these cities and localities are now in a state of siege and might at any time be pillaged or destroyed or occupied in violation of the Oslo agreements and the subsequent agreements signed by the Palestinian Authority, to which Israel, unfortunately, seems to attach as little importance as it does to the reproaches on the part of the international community occasioned by its policy of terror and repression.

The situation as it prevails today in the Middle East is particularly alarming, and, if we are not careful, it might point to an even broader and more dangerous

conflagration, that is to say new tragedies and new perils for a part of the world that has already been sorely tried by wars and conflicts that have only given rise to death, destruction and desolation.

The logic of confrontation can still, however, be reversed. It would only require that the international community, that is the Security Council, which the Charter has entrusted with the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, decide finally to act promptly, firmly and with determination as required by the seriousness of the situation.

It should, first of all, call for the full and urgent implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report, whose relevance the international community as a whole has praised and whose validity it has emphasized, and for the strict observance of a ceasefire, which is the key to the rapid establishment of impartial surveillance machinery.

It should then send as soon as possible international observers with a view to supervising to the effective respect of the ceasefire and ensuring the protection and security that the Palestinian civilian population needs.

It must also require that the Orient House and the offices of the Palestinian Authority be restored without delay and without conditions to their legitimate owners and that an end be put to aggression, incursions and punitive expeditions against Palestinian cities and communities.

It must then also finally see to it that Israel scrupulously and fully comply with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Moreover, greater involvement on the part of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who enjoys the esteem and confidence of the parties involved, might be useful and timely and help to reduce violence and tension in the region, and Algeria can only encourage that most earnestly.

This is what this Council must accomplish so that the entire region will not fall into violence. A final settlement to the Palestinian issue can, however, only be reached through the respect for international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace, solemnly agreed to in Madrid, and consequently through the restoration of the Palestinian people's national legitimate rights, including its right to the creation of its own independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The Security Council must act, and act quickly. That is its role and its responsibility. The Council's credibility depends on this, as does the future of a region that, during this dangerous summer as never before, finds itself at a crossroads.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Algeria for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

Some 30 speakers remain to be heard. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the agreement of the Council, I shall now suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.